RECEIVED
CENTRAL FAX CENTER
NOV 22 2006

Amendment to the Claims:

Please make the following amendments to the claims:

1-38 (Canceled)

39. (Currently amended) A disposable absorbent article comprising:
a topsheet;
a backsheet; and
an absorbent core disposed therebetween;
wherein said absorbent core is constructed of an absorbent composite including a plurality of absorbent layers of hydratable fine fibers in the form of microfibril obtained from cellulose or a derivative thereof, and super absorbent polymer (SAP) particles bonded together by said hydratable fibers; and
a continuous nonwoven substrate supporting said absorbent layers;
wherein said absorbent layers are spaced apart from one another to provide exposed nonwoven surface sections of said nonwoven substrate between absorbent layers.

40. (Currently amended) The~~the~~ article of claim 39, wherein said absorbent layers are coated upon said substrate.

41. (Previously presented) The article of claim 39, wherein said nonwoven substrate is a section of said backsheet.

42. (Previously presented) The article of claim 39, wherein said backsheet is formed from said absorbent composite, said absorbent layer including a low cross link SAP adapted to gel block upon wetting such that said backsheet is substantially impervious when wet and said backsheet is breathable when dry.

43. (Previously presented) The absorbent article of claim 39, wherein said SAP are water-swellable particles provided in concentrations in the range of about 50g/m2 to about 500 g/m2.

44. (Previously presented) The absorbent article of claim 39, wherein said absorbent core includes a prefabricated sheet of said absorbent composite.

45. (Previously presented) The absorbent article of claim 39, wherein said exposed surface sections form wicking zones between said absorbent layers.

46. (Previously presented) The absorbent article of claim 39, wherein said absorbent layers are laterally spaced, elongated segments.

47. (Currently amended) The absorbent article of claim 39, wherein said absorbent layer includes a low-crosslink, low gel strength SAP having free swell capacities of over 40 g/g and such that said absorbent layer is adapted to gel block upon wetting so as to be substantially impervious but ~~is~~ breathable when dry.

48. (Previously presented) The absorbent article of claim 39, wherein said absorbent layers are provided in distinct, generally dotted concentrations having a width and a depth.

49. (Previously presented) The absorbent article of claim 48, wherein said generally dotted concentrations have diameter width within the range of about 2 mm to about 20 mm, and wherein an average distance between proximate dotted concentrations is within about 1 mm to about 10 mm.

50. (Previously presented) The absorbent article of claim 48, wherein said dotted concentrations are arranged in a staggered pattern.

51. (Previously presented) The absorbent article of claim 39, wherein an average width of said absorbent layers is between about 1 mm to about 15 mm, and an average distance between proximate absorbent layers is within about 1 mm to about 25 mm.

52. (Previously presented) The absorbent article of claim 39, wherein said absorbent layers are provided in laterally spaced, elongated segments, said elongated segments including a wider section having a high concentration of SAP, said wider sections being positioned in a crotch region of the absorbent article.

53. (Previously presented) The absorbent article of claim 39, wherein said backsheet provides said non-woven substrate supporting said absorbent layers, and wherein said absorbent layers are elongated segments having a rounded cross-section, said backsheet extending about the rounded underside contour of said segments, such that elongated channel structures are formed beneath said elongated segments in which said elongated segments are situated.

54. (Currently amended) A disposable absorbent article comprising:

a topsheet;

a backsheet; and

an absorbent core disposed therebetween;

wherein said absorbent core is constructed of an absorbent composite including a plurality of absorbent layers of hydratable fine fibers in the form of microfibril obtained from cellulose or a derivative thereof, and super absorbent polymer (SAP) particles bonded together by said hydratable fibers; and

a continuous nonwoven substrate supporting said absorbent layers, wherein said absorbent layers are coated upon said substrate;

wherein said absorbent layers are spaced apart from one another to provide exposed nonwoven surface sections of said nonwoven substrate between absorbent layers, said exposed nonwoven surface sections providing wicking zones between said absorbent layers.

55. (Previously presented) The article of claim 54, wherein said nonwoven substrate is a section of said backsheet.

56. (Previously presented) The article of claim 54, wherein said backsheet is formed from said absorbent composite, said absorbent layer including a low cross link SAP adapted to gel block upon wetting such that said backsheet is substantially impervious when wet and said backsheet is breathable when dry.

57. (Currently amended) The absorbent article of claim [[~~57~~]]56, wherein said SAP are water-swellable particles included in a concentration in the range of about 50g/m2 to about 500 g/m2, said exposed surface sections providing predetermined expansion spares into which said absorbent layers expand upon wetting.

58. (Previously presented) The absorbent article of claim 54, wherein said absorbent core includes a prefabricated sheet of said absorbent composite.

59. (Currently amended) The absorbent article of claim 54, wherein said absorbent layer includes a low-crosslink, low gel strength SAP having free swell capacities of over 40 g/g and such that said absorbent layer is adapted to gel block upon wetting so as to be substantially impervious but ~~is~~ breathable when dry.

60. (Previously presented) The absorbent article of claim 54, wherein said absorbent layers are provided in distinct, generally dotted concentrations supported on said substrate.

61. (Previously presented) The absorbent article of claim 60, wherein said generally dotted concentrations have diameters within the range of about 2 mm to about 20 mm, and wherein an average distance between proximate dotted concentrations is within about 1 mm to about 10 mm.

62. (Previously presented) The absorbent article of claim 60, wherein said dotted concentrations are arranged in a staggered pattern.

63. (Previously presented) The absorbent article of claim 54, wherein an average width of said absorbent layers is between about 1 mm to about 15 mm and an average width of said wicking zones between proximate absorbent layers is within about 1 mm to about 25 mm.

64. (Previously presented) The absorbent article of claim 54, wherein said absorbent layers are provided in laterally spaced, elongated segments, said elongated segments including a wider section having high concentration SAP.

65. (Previously presented) The article of claim 54, wherein said backsheet provides a nonwoven substrate on which said absorbent layers are supported, said absorbent layers being spaced apart from one another on said substrate; and

wherein said absorbent layers are elongated segments having a rounded cross-section and said backsheet layer extends about the rounded underside contour of said segments, such that elongated channel structures are formed beneath said elongated segments in which said elongated segments are situated.

66. (Currently amended) A disposable absorbent article comprising:

a topsheet;

a backsheet; and

an absorbent core disposed therebetween;

wherein said absorbent core is constructed of an absorbent composite including

a plurality of absorbent layers of hydratable fine fibers in the form of microfibril obtained from cellulose or a derivative thereof, and super absorbent polymer (SAP) particles bonded together by said hydratable fibers; and

wherein said backsheet provides a continuous nonwoven substrate on which said absorbent layers are supported, said absorbent layers being spaced apart from one another on said nonwoven substrate to provide exposed nonwoven surface sections of said

nonwoven substrate between absorbent layers, said exposed nonwoven surface sections providing wicking zones between said absorbent layers; and

wherein said absorbent layers are elongated segments having a rounded cross-section and said backsheet layer extends about the rounded underside contour of said segments, such that elongated channel structures are formed beneath said elongated segments and in which said elongated segments are situated.

67. (Previously presented) The article of claim 66, wherein said backsheet is formed from said absorbent composite, said absorbent layer including a low cross link SAP adapted to gel block upon wetting such that said backsheet is substantially impervious when wet and said backsheet is breathable when dry.

68. (Previously presented) The absorbent article of claim 66, wherein said SAP are water-swellable particles included in a concentration in the range of about 50g/m2 to about 500 g/m2.

69. (Currently amended) The absorbent article of claim 66, wherein said absorbent layer includes a low-crosslink, low gel strength SAP having free swell capacities of over 40 g/g and such that said absorbent layer is adapted to gel block upon wetting so as to be substantially impervious but ~~is~~ breathable when dry.

70. (Previously presented) The absorbent article of claim 66, wherein an average width of said absorbent layers is between about 1 mm to about 15 mm, and an average width of said wicking zones between proximate absorbent layers is within about 1 mm to about 25 mm.